

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated June 25, 2009. Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 13 to 15, 17, 18 and 22 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 18 and 22 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 5, 7, 18 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,182,069 (Niblack) in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0112357 (Anderson). Claims 13 to 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Niblack in view of Anderson and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,612,715 (Karaki), and Claim 17 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Niblack in view of Anderson and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,356,908 (Brown). The rejections are respectfully traversed, as follows.

The claims herein generally concern the use of an image search apparatus to search for images. A plurality of images is stored. Partial images included in the respective stored images are stored in correspondence with the respective stored images. Features of the stored partial images are stored in correspondence with the respective stored partial images. A feature to be used as a search query is received. An image including a partial image which contains a feature corresponding to the search query is searched for. A searched image is displayed, the partial image corresponding to the search query in the searched image is enlarged, and the enlarged partial image is composed onto the displayed searched image.

By virtue of enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search condition, the partial image is emphasized for the user, who is therefore able to grasp it more readily.

Applicant submits that the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the notion of enlarging a partial image that corresponds to a search query, and composing the enlarged partial image onto a displayed searched image.

More particularly, the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of receiving a feature as a search query, searching for an image including a partial image which contains a feature corresponding to the search query, displaying the searched image, enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search query in the searched image, and composing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed searched image.

At page 4, the Office Action alleges that Anderson discloses "search result display means for displaying a searched image, enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search condition, and composing the enlarged partial image, on to the displayed searched image". Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Anderson is seen to disclose user selection of a thumbnail image, and automatic display of an enlarged entirety of the thumbnail image. In Anderson, there is no enlargement of a partial image, much less enlargement of a partial image that corresponds to a search query. Moreover, Anderson is seen to disclose display of the large thumbnail with the selected image, as seen in Fig. 3, not composition of an enlarged partial image onto a displayed searched image.

The Office Action is not seen to articulate how one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that Anderson discloses enlarging a partial image of a searched image, and composing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed searched image.

Therefore, Anderson is not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the notion of enlarging a partial image that corresponds to a search query, and composing the enlarged partial image onto a displayed searched image.

Karaki, Brown, Niblack, and Enokida have been studied, but they are not seen to teach anything that, when combined with Anderson, would overcome the deficiencies of Anderson as described above.

Therefore, the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the notion of enlarging a partial image that corresponds to a search query, and composing the enlarged partial image onto a displayed searched image.

More particularly, the applied references, alone or in any permissible combination, are not seen to disclose or to suggest at least the features of receiving a feature as a search query, searching for an image including a partial image which contains a feature corresponding to the search query, displaying the searched image, enlarging the partial image corresponding to the search query in the searched image, and composing the enlarged partial image onto the displayed searched image.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 1, 18 and 22, as well as the claims dependent therefrom, are believed to recite subject matter that would not have been obvious from the applied art, and are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance.